AFTER

ART BRUT

VOLUME 1

THE WINKING WOMAN

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ART BRUT™

Mat Lopes

Bienvenue!

Now please, no *flashes*. No artificial lighting *whatsoever*.

In fact, I implore you not to take *any* pictures.

She should be *seen*. All of this should be ***experienced***.

Not through a lens, but with *these*.

...so put away your **SLRs** and your **HD devices** and your *camera phones*.

Open wide, ladies and gentlemen...

The Mona Lisa!

One of da Vinci's great contributions--perhaps his ***greatest***--to the canon of western portraiture.

It's so **small!**

A mere *seventy-seven centimeters*. But note its unrivaled **spatial coherence.** Observe the atmospheric daring. See through the window of--

I thought they were **both** supposed to be *open*?

What a scam. It's a ***phony!***

Ein Auge ist geschlossen!

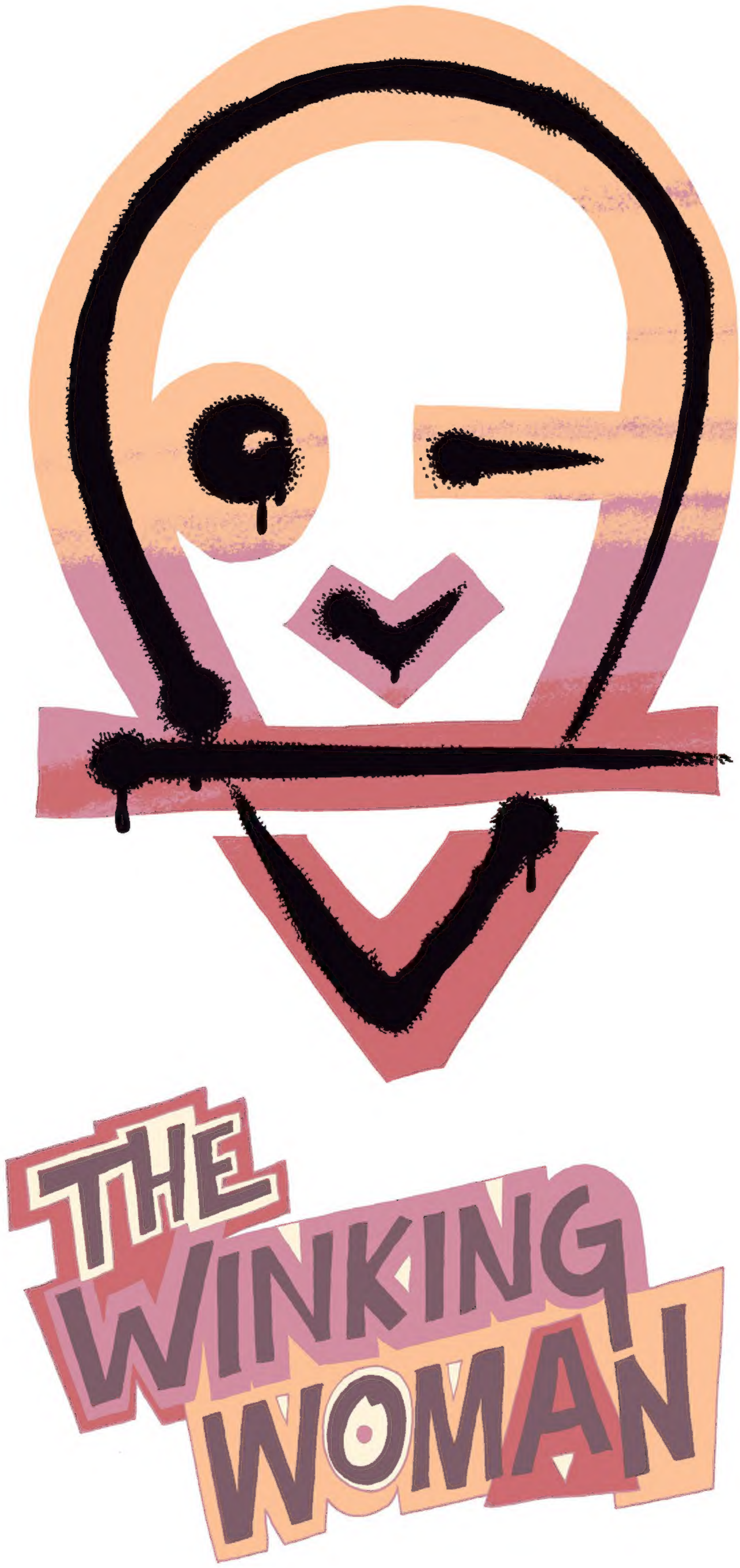
Oh, no... No no no.

Someone call the B.A.I.!

Get ***Director Breslin*** on the line!

We're going to need the **Dreampainter!**

We're going to need ***Art Brut!***



THE WINKING WOMAN

CHAPTER I

What's he on?

Well...

Two anti-psychotics: *clozapine* and *risperidone*.

Max daily dosage on both.

Also *clonazepam* for ***acute anxiety***, *duloxetine* for ***manic depression***...

Max dosage for those, too.

No! I don't want it!

You can't make me! This is a violation of my human rights!

Nerh--

Add to that a number of *homeopathic supplements*...

Miss Breslin?

Hhhhh

Turmeric, milk thistle, oil of oregano.

But it doesn't...none of it seems to ***do*** very much.

The only thing that works is letting him ***paint***.

Your **predecessor** helped get clearance for a weekly allotment of ***art supplies***.

Stretched canvas, egg tempera, *oil paints*, brushes...

A ***wooden mannequin***. He--

Brut, Arthur

Director.

I'm sorry?

It's ***Director*** Breslin.

Is he painting right now?

ARTHUR?

ARTHUR...

Arthur?

Someone's here to see you.

I was *dreampainting*...

That's *me*, riding the *whorls*!

Mr. Brut, I'm Director **Margot Breslin**.

I'm here on behalf of the ***Bureau of Artistic Integrity.***

Director? What happened to *Jim*?

He used to bring me ***candy.***

Retired. With ***diabetes.***

All incidents of **artistic anomaly** and *art-related catastrophe* are now under ***my*** purview.

The Mona Lisa's ***winking*** and people are losing their minds.

It started in **Tulsa**. An art collector with a thing for *Cézanne's* ***still lifes*** was found dead in his private gallery.

As you can see, the victim excised his ***left eye*** with a fork, then shot himself in the temple.

Note the ***symbol*** he carved into his chest before pulling the trigger.

"In Sarasota, a husband and wife cast their children in *hot bronze*, claiming ***Neo-Dada conventions*** as their only defense."

"And that's just *continental*. In Helsinki, a man took out an entire **school** with a homemade bomb..."

ERASE IT ALL!

"One hundred eighty-five kids. ***All deceased.***"

Finnish authorities found a suicide note in his apartment, next to a painter's easel.

Look.

No words, no rationale. Just the ***image***.

And now the Louvre. *Her.*

She's *winking*, just like the **ideogram**. The museum's citing a record number of *sick* patrons...

I need to know if you're **well enough** to work with us on this, Arthur.

"Well enough."

These pills they have me on make my tongue taste like *chalk*.

I'm all jammed up inside!

Nothing makes any sense out here!

But maybe... maybe I could go back *in*? What do **you** think, Manny?

Oh, Christ.

Yes! The Continuing Adventures of ***Art Brut and Manny the Mannequin!***

We'll get to the bottom of your **winky lady!**

Elsewhere...

Almost there, sweetie.

I know it's scary.

But I'll make you a **deal**: you don't like the place, we turn this car *right back around* and go home.

Okay?

Oh, that's beautiful, Dylan.

Sweetie, look...

Cows!

What does a cow say?

Dylan? Can you tell me what a cow says?

Dylan. What's a cow say?

Dylan.

Dylan!

Moo.

That's right, sweetie.

Almost there now.

My fellowship had me doing archival work for the bureau at the ***National Gallery***.

...this was back in '94, when I was still a PhD student.

It was all so incredibly dull! And the Oslo cold only made it *worse*.

But then the *Munch Incident*, watching you... ***GO*** into a painting like that was just...well... ***exhilarating***.

I actually got to file the report! My signature is on the ***Scream Papers***.

Can I just say it's an honor, Mr. Brut?

All that ***noise*** coming from your mouth...

It's like this awful, high-pitched ***kazoo*** music.

But where's your **kazoo**?

Hello, winky!

This is the *last* of it...

Agent Parks. I need an *update.*

"You need."

What about what *I* need?

Physical therapy and a friggin ***sabbatical.***

How many?

Twenty-six more deaths designated ***Art-Possible.***

Twenty-eight if you count ***this*** one.

Two *homeless men* beat each other to death in Piccadilly Square.

So? That's pedestrian stuff. Pass it to the London local.

Yeah, but look what they were fighting over...

A can of soup?

No, a ***painting*** of a can of soup.

Jesus.

...I'm completely out of my depth.

Mr. Brut?

You ever get that *feeling*?

Like no matter where you are in the room, someone's ***eyes*** are following you?

POP!

*

Arthur Brut...

You shouldn't be out of bed.

Shit! Parks!

Art is anything you can get away with...

Destroy it all.

Shit shit shit shit shit.

Hey...

Follow me!

-:cough:-
-:cough:-

Wha--?

Director Breslin.

It's so nice to finally get to talk to you.

M-Manny?

Manford Moorington Wood.

The third, to be precise.

But "Manny" is also very acceptable, thank you.

She's dead.

Poor Mona...

Hello, Margot. Welcome to *The World Behind the Canvas.*

Thank you so much, **Doctor Oldenburg.** Really.

He's in good hands, Miss Thompson.

Dylan will be able to *flourish* here.

The brochure said--

--that we *employ a mixture of therapeutic art-making and analytical transference methods*, yes.

Which means, simply, that although our approach is *person-centered*...

We'll also let Dylan's ***art*** speak for him.

Let's see what he's *saying* right now, *hm*?

Oh...

Hi, Mommy!

But wait...

There's more...

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF ART BRUT

PRESENTING HERE THE INCIPIENT EXPLOITS OF NONE OTHER THAN ***ARTHUR BRUT THE MAD DREAMPAINTER***...AND ALSO HIS WHIMSICAL WARD ***MANNY THE WOODEN MANNEQUIN!*** WHEN PAINTINGS ARE UNDER ATTACK, *MISTER BRUT* IS ON THE CASE! ...***AND WAS HE EVER,*** IN *THIS*, THE FORGOTTEN (AND HONESTLY KIND OF FORGETTABLE) TALE OF...

THE GIRL WHO LOST A VERY SMALL PIECE OF JEWELRY!

AT THE **BUREAU OF ARTISTIC INTEGRITY** (*A GLOBE-SPANNING SECRET SERVICE DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO OF OUR PRECIOUS ART!*), DIRECTOR **JIM O'CONNOR** RECEIVES A DISTURBING TELEGRAM....

YOU HEARD THAT RIGHT, FOLKS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT SOME SICK, ACCESSORY-OBSESSED SHEISTER HAS REMOVED A BELOVED PIECE OF BIVALVE-BORNE JEWELRY FROM THE SUBJECT OF **JOHANNES VERMEER'S** *VAUNTED GOLDEN AGE CLASSIC...* ***GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING!***

AND SO, THERE AT THE *MAURITSHUIS* IN THE *FRIGID NETHERLANDS*, ARTHUR BRUT DOES *EXACTLY* WHAT HE DOES BEST...

HE DIVES RIGHT IN!!

THERE SHE IS, MASTER BRUT.

GIRL! WHAT HAPPENED?

MY LEFT LOBE IS SO COLD...

OH, ARTHUR, THEY WERE *TERRIBLE*-- FULL OF SALT AND BRINE...

THEY?

I BELIEVE SHE MEANS *THEM*, SIR...

HOLD ON TO YOUR *BUTTS*, LAND LUBBERS, BECAUSE IT SEEMS OL' MANNY HAS CORNERED THE *CLAMMY CULPRITS* OF THIS CALLOUS ACT OF *CARTILAGINOUS CRIME!*

SO IT WAS BIRTHED FROM OUR MOUTHS, SO IT SHALL RETURN!

...DUTCH OYSTERS.

MENACING MOLLUSKS OF MISCHIEF, MASTER!

IF YOU'RE A MARINE BIOLOGIST (WHICH I'M ASSUMING MOST OF YOU ARE), YOU'LL KNOW ALL TOO WELL THAT THE KEY TO DETACHING AN OYSTER FROM ITS SHELL IS ***SEVERING*** THE SLIMY SUNUVABITCH'S **ADDUCTOR MUSCLE...**

...WHICH INSPIRES ARTHUR (WHO TOOK *OCEANOGRAPHY 101* FOR COLLEGE SCIENCE CREDIT) TO PAINT--

--A GIANT *SHUCKING KNIFE!*

VIOLENCE IN A VERMEER!
IK VIND HET VERSCHRIKKELIJK!

...MAYBE I SHOULD GET *MY* EAR PIERCED.

THERE'S A KIOSK AT THE MALL THAT DOES IT FOR CHEAP!

YOUR *PEARL*, MADAM.

OH, ARTHUR, YOU'RE SO BRAVE!

HE *IS*, ISN'T HE?

TOT ZIENS!

THERE'S A SAYING, YOU KNOW, THAT "*THE WORLD IS OUR OYSTER.*"--THAT **ANYTHING AT ALL** IS POSSIBLE ON THE SURFACE OF THIS SANDY, SPINNING **ROCK** WE CALL HOME...

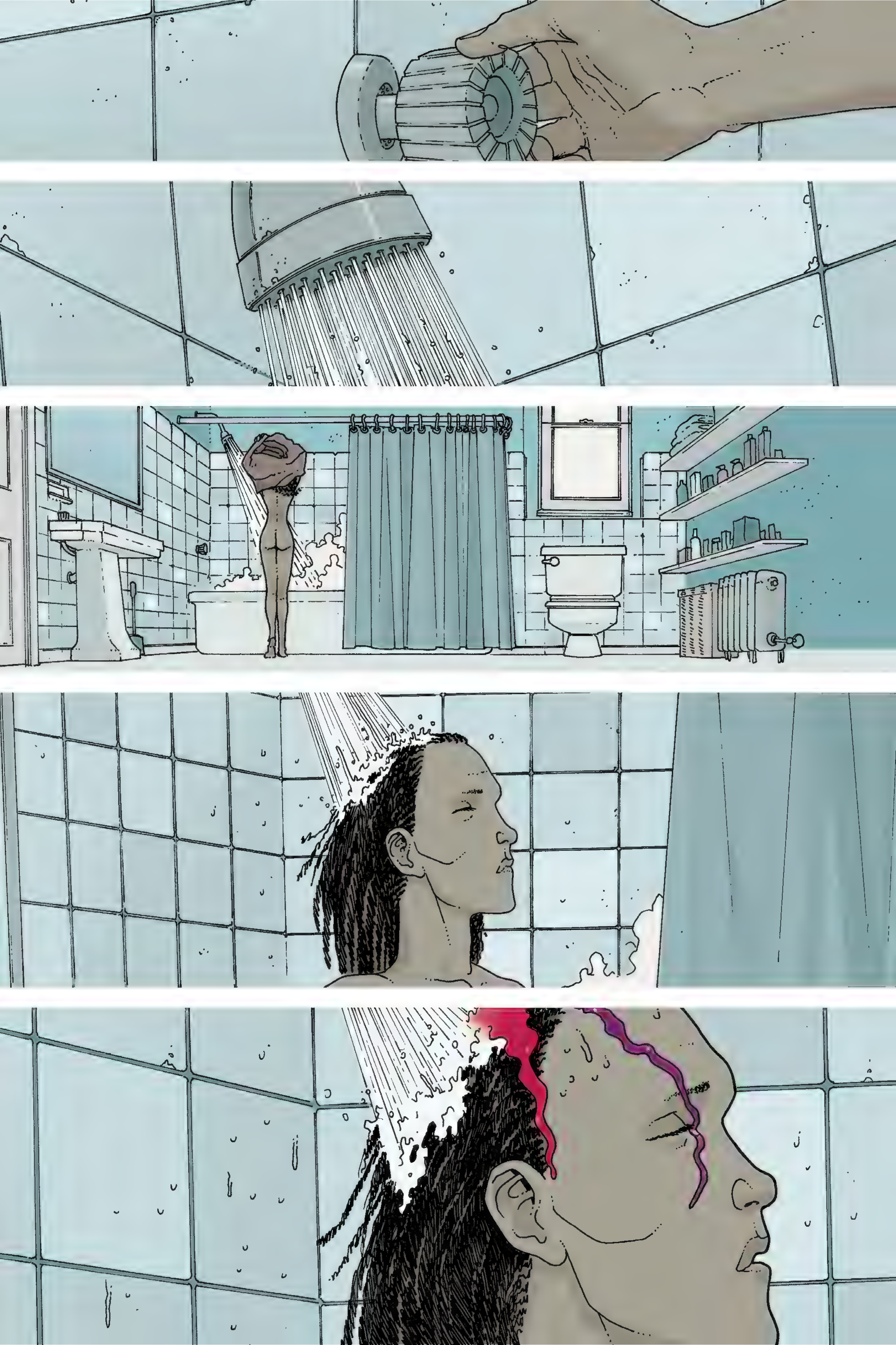
HOPE YOU'RE *HUNGRY*, DIRECTOR.

...AND THAT'S **ABSOLUTELY** RIGHT.

...ON THE HALF SHELL!

ANYTHING AT ALL!

ART BRUT



Huh?

GAH!

AAA!

KEY OF DREAMS

CHAPTER · II

You like it?

It's called "*A Study in Vision.*"

It's... *gorgeous.*

This is amazing work, Inny.

Tell that to the **galleries.** *Three* rejections so far...

And get this...

You remember Eric Davis? That dimple-chinned prick from my MFA?

Kate says he just sold a piece to Lehman for ***forty thousand dollars.***

Forty grand!

A couple of those and maybe we could afford a place with a ***guest room.***

What did we talk about? *Patience.*

You'll get there...

Ha! *"You'll get there."*

I love you, but you can really be an *insufferable cunt* sometimes.

You seem to **suffer** it just fine.

Hm.

Breakfast?

Not for me...

I've got some **work** to do.

Where do I even ***begin***?

Everything seems different...everything seems *wrong*.

Whatever I eat tastes bland and completely *watered down*.

The world feels somehow **less vibrant**, like the *dials* have been cranked backwards from ten to two...

...and I can't sleep for shit.

Where in God's name did I ***go***?

What did I see?

28 hours ago

I...
I don't *under-*
stand.

Try harder.

"The world behind the canvas..."

Deep in the starch-particles, ***under*** the strokes of paint...

...where ***color*** comes to life.

We're walking through *La Gionconda*, Director Breslin.

Isn't it ever so **lovely?**

We're *inside* the **Mona Lisa?**

Sure, if you want to be ***crude*** about it.

But a more ***accurate*** way to phrase it would be: *we're within a persisting event.*

Da Vinci, that cranky bastard, created the world of La Gioconda--the ***Mona Lisa***--at a specific place and time in history.

Leo died, but the worlds he *made* did not.

Poor Miss Lisa; she'll never smile again...

It's like a ***dream***. All the colors, the textures...

Dreams are ***different***.

This is one of countless very *real* and very **important** places, all made by geniuses and ***madmen***.

People call it *Inspiration*, or *The Composition*, or *A Good Idea*...

And there's something very, ***very*** wrong with it...

Our art's ***sick***.

It's no wonder everyone's going crazy...

When this place suffers, so does beep ba-deep buzz buzz.

Huh? What did you say?

Ring ring.

Beep buzz buzz.

Beep Buzz Buzz

Breslin.

...what?

Jesus. I'm on my way.

Agent Drake. Give me a **sitrep**, And *fast*.

Like I said on the phone: *public art class*. "Make like Matisse" or some such flowery nonsense. Seven dead, only *one* survivor.

The rest, well...

BAI

Go in and take a look for yourself.

But I'd suggest you hold on to your breakfast...

2248

...it's like a fucking *Pollock* in there.

BAI

Maybe I've got it all **backwards**...

Maybe the *salient* thing about **The World Behind the Canvas** isn't that it was dreamy and *strange*...

Everything in there-- it felt unbearably, unmistakably ***real***.

While *my* world...

...keeps getting more and more *unbelievable*.

Director Breslin?

We, uh... we gave the **survivor** some tea...and *Xanax*.

She's calmed down some.

She says she's ready to ***talk*** to you.

Jeez. It ***is*** like a Pollock.

Or maybe it's all ***bullshit***.

What do I know?

I know it's *hard*, Ms. Walker.

But I need you to tell me ***everything***, in as much detail as possible.

I...

I'm an accountant. Associate level.

I...I enter numbers into spreadsheets all day.

It gets so boring, you know?

My mother told me I should take a class.

"Spice things up," she said. "***Stay stimulated.***"

I found out about *this one* in a brochure.

...I always liked Matisse. And it was *free*.

And our instructor, **Mr. Wunderlich**. He was so, just...*kind*.

He didn't care how bad my paintings were.

But then...we had a *substitute* today. He said Mr. Wunderlich was "*sick with the flu.*"

This new guy, he was...**weird**. Like *off*, you know?

The kind of person that makes you nervous, but you're not sure why?

He put a **painting** on the easel. I tried not to look at it...

And he asked the class: "*Do you know what Matisse said?*"

"*He said that painters must begin by* ***cutting out their tongues.***"

And they...

Oh, my god. They did it. I watched them all *do* it!

The ***substitute.*** Can you tell me what he *looked* like?

Ms. Walker?

Like...

Like ***Andy Warhol.***

Shit.

26 hours ago

Shit.

I could have sworn there was a **door** here.

Please do try to refrain from *obscenities*, Master Brut.

A lady is present, after all.

We need to go back!

Those men, that guy dressed like Warhol...

They're called *The Correction*.

Nasty bunch. And completely *out of their skulls*.

So, what, you're ***sane*** in here?

And your *doll* grows to seven feet tall?

Forgive me in advance for my stern tone, Ms. Breslin, but I am *not* a doll.

...I am a fully posable, highly articulated *wooden mannequin*...

And I'm *seven feet and six inches* in height.

I'm glad you've dropped the whole "*gobsmacked Dorothy in oh-so-colorful Oz*" shtick, Margot.

But *some* questions are better left **unasked**.

Oh, ***crud***...

An *art tumor.*

Tumor?!

Like cancer, but more *creative.*

...I'll talk to it.

What am I looking at?

Ms. Breslin, if you'd please stand behind my joints...

Art can be *very* dangerous.

Far enough, *thingamabob.*

WUN I O-PEN, WUN I CLOZE

KILL THE DREEM PANE-TER!!!

I had a feeling. In that case...

En Garde!

Nada. Did I forget to **charge** this thing?

Gah!

My God...

Master Brut!

SLURP!

YUM. WUN I OPEN

WUN I CL--

WUN I... I...I...

BOOM!

Arthur!

ugh

Are you harmed, sir?

I'm *fine.*

The *safety* was on.

Now, where were we?

Ah, yes, that's right...

A doorway *home.*

We came out of a **painting** in Inny's studio.

"A Study in Vision."

Isn't everything?

My father used to say that there are a million "*ways of seeing.*"

...that the relation between what we ***see*** and what we ***know*** is never truly settled.

I always figured this was just more of his jazz-artist ***bullshit***.

"*Far out, man*" and "*feel the groove*" and all that sort of stuff.

Oh good, you're back.

But I'm starting to think he was *right*...

Our ***guest*** just woke up, and he's--

Gesso, gypsum...

Acrylic, watercolor...

What did I **see**?

What do I ***know***?

Where's my paint?

I NEED MY PAINT!!

Epilogue

Now, Dylan, I'm going to show you some *pictures*, okay?

And I want you to tell me what you ***see***...

Dylan?

I see a ...door.

Very good.

And this one?

Perfect.

What about now?

A *birdie.*

Great, Dylan. Just great.

What about ***this*** one? What do you see?

The wind.

I see...

kaboom.

"That's right, Dylan."

"That's *exactly right*."

But wait...

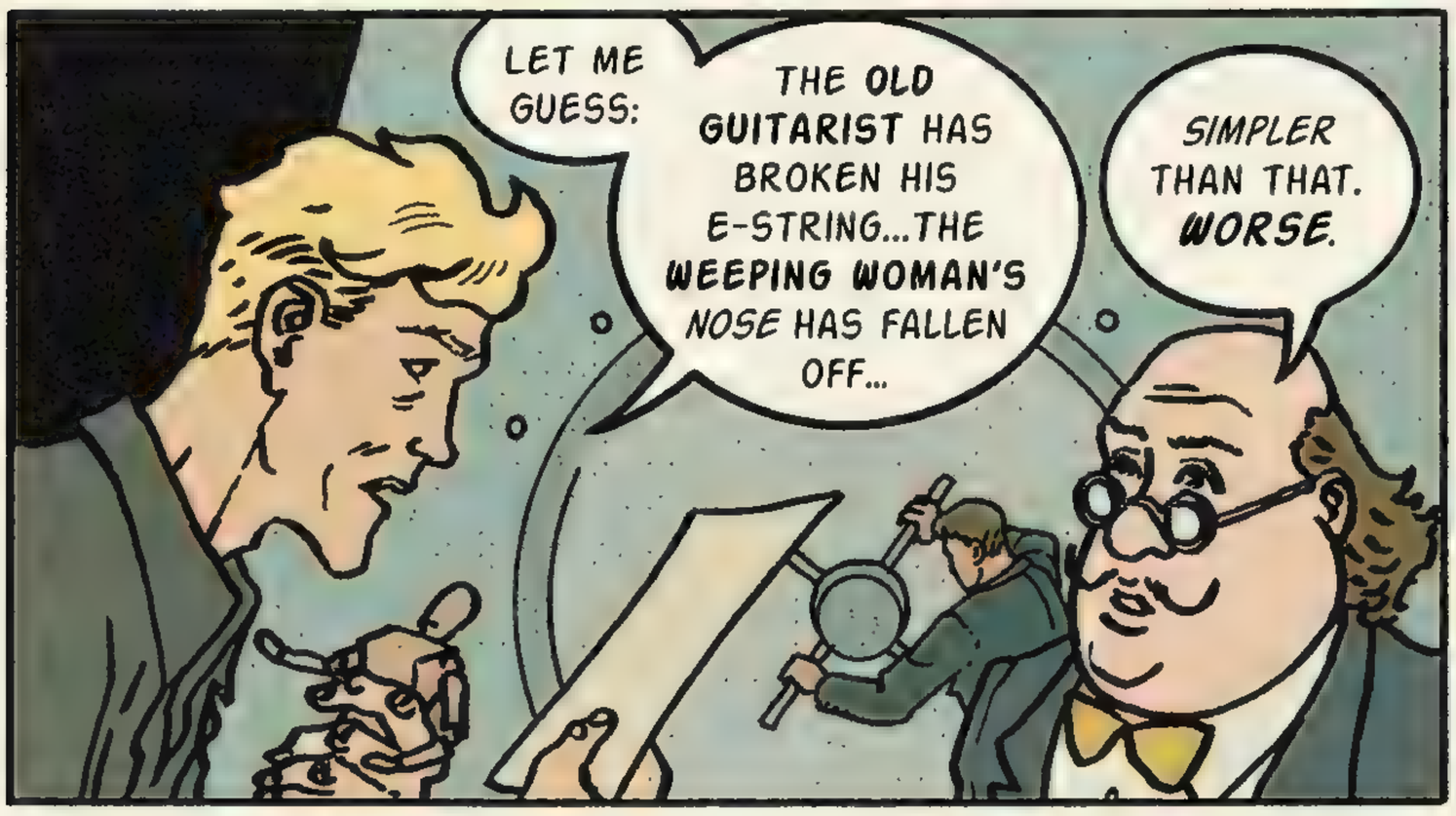
There's more...

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF ART BRUT

WELCOME BACK, *YE PERUSERS OF PRETTY, PETTY PULP,* TO THE **CONFUSING** WORLD OF ***ART PROBLEMS!*** AFTER LAST CHAPTER'S EXCESS OF...*PEARL-CLUTCHING*...WE'RE READY NOW TO DIVE INTO ANOTHER LOST YARN OF THE MAD DREAMPAINTER'S TRIPPY, TRIVIAL TRAVAILS! SEE HERE, BELOW, IN CMYK-OUTPUT, THE STORY OF...

THE WINDMILLS THAT WERE ACTUALLY MONSTERS.

DEEP IN THE TOP-SECRET BASEMENT ARCHIVES OF THE ***BAI'S*** NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS, **ART BRUT** IS KEPT ABREAST OF THE LATEST CONUNDRUM CONCERNING CLASSIC COMPOSITION...



IN WHAT STRANGE WORLD IS SOMETHING "SIMPLER" ***WORSE?*** (THAT'S RHETORICAL, FRIENDS--THE ANSWER AWAITS YOU ON THE PAGE-TURN...)

DON QUIXOTE... *TILTING AT WIND MONSTERS!*

YOU MIGHT **NOT** BELIEVE IT, WERE YOU NOT *HERE*, DEEP WITHIN THE FARCICAL CONFINES OF THESE FUNNY PAGES! BUT YOU **ARE**, DEAR FRIEND, AND SO PERHAPS IT'S BEST YOU LET YOUR **DISBELIEF** *PROLAPSE* A FEW INCHES...

FUCKING *DONNY*. WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

WHERE HAS MY SQUIRE **SANCHO PANZA** DISAPPEARED TO?!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GONNA SAY THIS, DONNY, BUT YOU'VE GOT A ***WINDMILL*** PROBLEM.

AS I'VE ALWAYS SUGGESTED!

*"...WITH THEIR LONG ARMS...SOME OF THEM HAVE ARMS WELL NIGH **TWO LEAGUES** IN LENGTH..."*

YEP, THAT CHECKS OUT.

DOES IT EVER! JUST LOOK AT THOSE *LONG ARMS!* AND TO SAY NOTHING OF THEIR *UNFRIENDLY FACES!* YOU'LL FIND NO GUST-BORROWED ROTATIONAL ENERGY HERE, READER--JUST ***HORROR*** UPON HORROR UPON **HORROR**, SPINNING EVER 'ROUND!

AND SO OUR HERO--WHO, LIKE QUIXOTE, IS EXPERIENCING A CERTAIN *DIMINISHING* IN HIS *COGNITIVE POWERS*--ATTEMPTS TO TAME THE VANES OF THE *TRANSFORMED TURBINE TOWERS!*

THEY KEEP *SPINNING!*

I'D BE **DIZZY** IF I HAD AN INNER EAR, SIR!

IMAGINARY ENEMIES! THEY'RE POWERED BY **BELIEF** ALONE!

UNDERSTOOD, MASTER BRUT!

I'VE HAD A **STORY-SPECIFIC** REVELATION, MANNY!

AND THERE, HIGH UPON THE ROTATING BLADES, ARTHUR BRUT HAS A *STORY-SPECIFIC* REVELATION...

...FOR NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL CAN LAST FOREVER; AND SO IT FOLLOWS THAT AS **EVIL** HAS LASTED A LONG TIME, *GOOD* MUST NOW BE *CLOSE AT HAND...*

AND SO ART BRUT AND MANNY THE WOODEN MANNEQUIN THERE DECIDE TO TILT THEIR MINDS IN A *DIFFERENT* DIRECTION...

TOWARD *REASON*!

WE *THOUGHT* THEM BACK INTO PERSPECTIVE.

MONSTERS MADE OF MADNESS. BADDIES BORNE BY A BROKEN BRAIN!

WHEN LIFE ITSELF SEEMS LUNATIC, WHO KNOWS WHERE MADNESS LIES? PERHAPS TO BE TOO PRACTICAL IS MADNESS. TO SURRENDER DREAMS--THIS MAY BE MADNESS. TOO MUCH SANITY MAY BE MADNESS-- AND MADDEST OF ALL: TO SEE LIFE AS IT IS, AND NOT AS IT SHOULD BE!

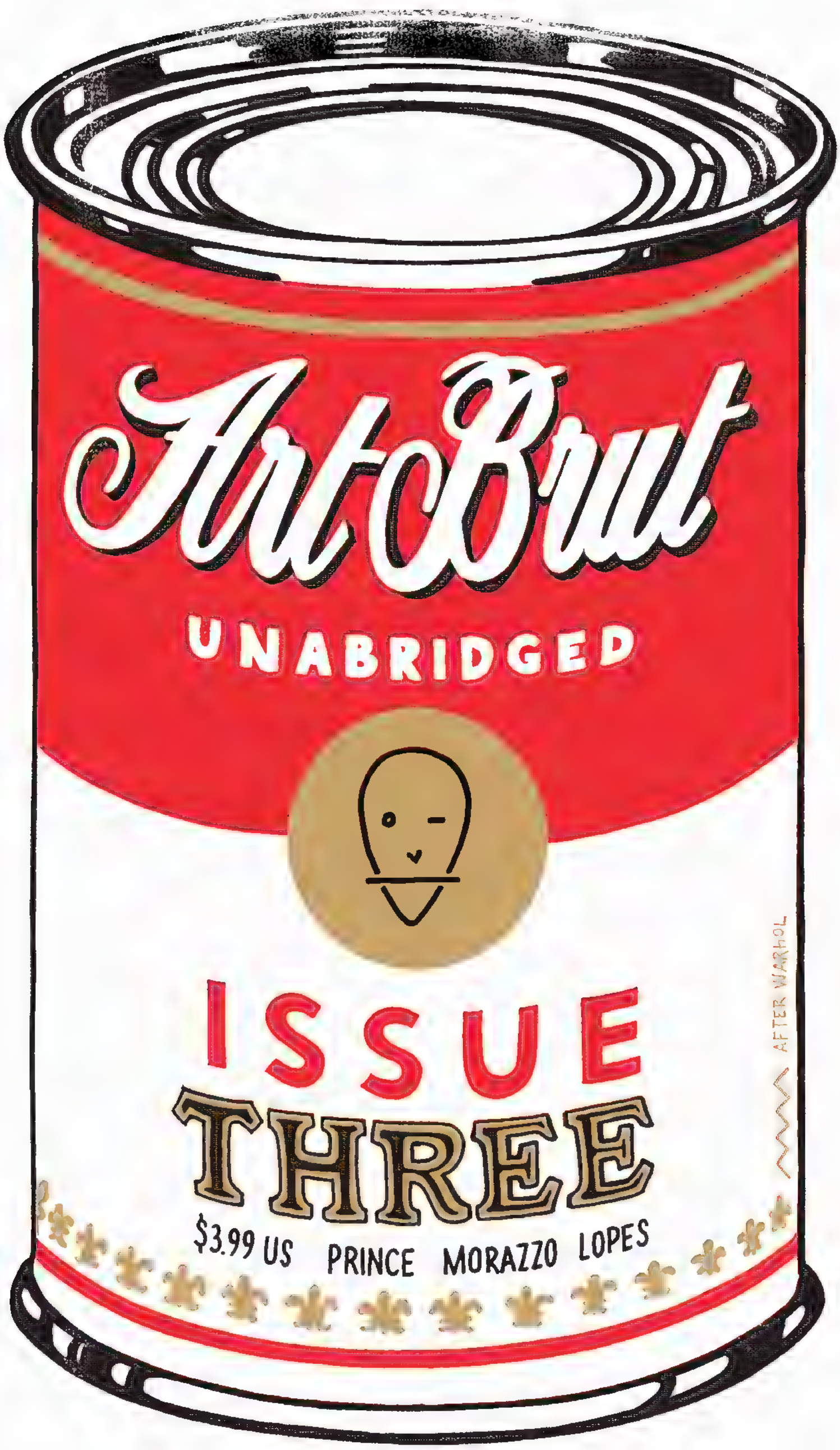
WHATEVER YOU SAY, MAN. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.

...IF I KEEP *GOING INTO PAINTINGS*, I'M GONNA END UP JUST LIKE HIM!

WE'LL GET YOU ON SOME *MEDS*, SORT IT OUT. NOT TO WORRY.

WILL THE MEDS WORK? *DO THEY EVER?* FIND OUT NEXT TIME IN

THE CONTINUING (EARLY) ADVENTURES OF ART BRUT!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FOR CREATIVE ART

Hm.

Jeffrey.

So sorry to keep you waiting.

It was rude of me, I know.

But sometimes I get so *lost* in my work.

How about we put work away for the day?

It's time for a little ***release***.

Try not to scream.

Sir?

Please, come in.

We're in the midst of a true *creative moment*...

Look what Jeffrey helped make!

It's ***hideous***, sir.

Just like the world.

...to what do I owe the pleasure of your interruption?

One of the *sensitives*. **Dylan Thompson.**

We think he might be...

...dream-painting.

Oh. ***Oh!*** Well then...

"Perhaps it's time we introduce young Mr. Thompson to *The Room*."

Sotto Voce
CHAPTER III

Your *auto-graph.*

Golly, talk about a ***requisition.***

This might be the biggest pull the B.A.I.'s ever made!

Careful with those!

Some of my best friends are in there.

Hundreds of ***original paintings...***

*All for a **nutjob.***

I hope you know what you're doing, Arthur.

This is costing the Bureau a *fortune.*

Where's **Vox?!**

Who?

*Sir Loudmouth. Mr. "**Woe is the world!**"*

Aha!

There he is!

The Scream, by Edvard Munch.

The ultimate artistic meditation on *anxiety*.

"An infinite shriek passing through nature..."

Exactly! Vox!

If there's something ***awful*** going on, Vox'll know all about it! He's the *king* of awful!

...I need to take this.

Now's not really a good time, Inny.

That fucking ***lunatic***!

He used all my paint! My studio is a mess!

How am I supposed to work like this?!

You're in one of your moods.

Can't you just go buy *more*? You can put it on my card...

One of my "moods"?!

And money's not the fucking point, Margot. Jesus!--

CLICK

Did I mess up?

It's just that if I don't paint I get--

It's not you.

She's always this way when she starts a new project.

That's what happens when you try to *make* something...

You want it to be so...*perfect*. But everything you do is just a ***betrayal*** of your hopes for the thing.

...stuff comes out all wrong.

It can drive you **crazy!**

We should go back *in!*

We could talk to Vox and--

We? Abso-fucking-lutely *not.*

My brain's still ***reeling*** from the last time!

...it's no wonder you're off your rocker.

Wait. I didn't mean it like *that.* I just...

I've got a line on that missing art teacher. ***Bill Wunderlich.***

Apparently he's been holed up in a bar downtown for a few days, running up a tab.

I'll go talk to him, see why he was **MIA** on the day of the *massacre.*

And you...

You can go talk to your ***friend.***

Do you know where we are, Dylan?

Do you know why you're here?

A... room.

Not *a* room, Dylan. ***The*** Room.

A ***perfect*** place...

Blank and **featureless** and stripped of *complications* like emotion and thought and *perspective*.

Nothing; a work of *true* art.

At the center of creation: ***the barren, empty heart of the world!***

This is your new ***home***.

Get cozy!

Well, Manny. It's about that time again.

In we go...

Do you think it's ***wise***, Master Brut, to allow Ms. Breslin to attend to the matter of **The Correction** unaccompanied?

The Director strikes me as someone *perfectly capable* of taking care of herself.

Look...

Vox.

AAAA

I see.

And how long has this been going on?

Ever s-since the boy and his skinny friends started showing up.

What do you--

There they are!!

It seems the tumors have multi-plied, sir.

They're so quiet...

That boy...

How'd he get in here?

Nurse! More *medicine*, please.

Not so shallow this time...

Bill? Bill Wunderlich?

If you're from the **IRS**, you can tell your bosses what I told the ***last*** guy:

I can't pay **income tax** if I don't *have* any ***income***.

I'm just here to *talk*.

My name's Margot...

Tt.

Don't think I'm your ***type***, Fräulein.

You teach an art class, Tuesdays and Thursdays down at the rec center...

And on the *one day* you decide not to show up, all of your students just happen to rip their tongues ***right out of their heads.***

You're going to tell me ***everything*** you know.

Starting with what this *symbol* is.

Speak... speak *softly.*

...they have **eyes** *every-where.*

They? They *who?*

I don't... they never *tell* you what the ideogram really means...

It's just part of the ***education.***

Something you learn during the classes and the *lessons* and the... the *tests.*

They never ***tell*** you, but somehow you ***know.***

You mean a school? They showed you this in a school?

It's not a--

They told my parents it was a *therapy center.*

I had a lot of trouble as a boy. I was...*off.*

I was an **artist,** but I *hated* everything I made.

I had this... *obsession* with **perfection.**

There'd be these gorgeous ideas in my head, but they'd all come out...

It would never be ***good*** enough! And the doctor would say:

"The only sane response to imperfection is to destroy the imperfect thing."

Do you have any idea what that's *like*? To feel... ***betrayed*** by what you make?

...to know it'll never be good enough...

They let me out after a while...

I had no money, my family was gone...

And then I started to see it...

The **open eye** looking out from the center.

Imperfection *personified.*

Everywhere you look!

There's an ***eyeball*** on the back of a one-dollar bill.

The sun and the moon...

Two eyes, never open at the same time.

As if heaven's ***winking*** at you.

Doctor Oldenburg came dressed up in his costume and told me not to show up to class...

I didn't want anyone to get hurt.

Costume.

Let me guess...

"...he was dressed like **Andy Warhol.**"

I want you to think of a ***thousand paintings***, Dylan. The ones we *showed* you.

Each a **grotesque**--*flawed* and repulsive.

A ***stain*** on the perfect skin of history.

Think. Draw...

And let ***The Room*** do the rest!

From the inside out, we'll ***erase*** every mistake.

Figure to figure, landscape to landscape...

"...we'll *correct* every imperfection."

The boy!

He's gone!

It would appear so, Master Brut.

Hup!

AAAAAAAAAAA

Vox!
Hold on!

AAAAAAAAA.

Let
him go,
one-eye.

Shhhhhh

A-Arthur?

No.

VOX!

Oh...my. Master Brut...

First **Mona**, now Vox.

All my best friends are dying, Manny...

We need to make it ***stop***.

Wunderlich's story *squares.*

A match for one **Dr. Peter Oldenburg** at the *Kinsville Center for Creative Arts and Play Therapy.*

Place has been around for a while...

Currently houses *thirteen* students, most between ages eight and sixteen.

...all parents are either unreachable or ***recently deceased.***

Looks *nice.*

...I'm gonna need a ***car.***

Continued.

But wait...

There's more...

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF ART BRUT

AFTER LAST MONTH'S SERIOUSLY *SKETCHY* SHORT, WE'RE BACK TO ART'S *ABRIDGED ANNALS* AGAIN, THIS TIME WITH A STORY OF BUCOLIC BEDLAM--BROUGHT ABOUT BY NONE OTHER THAN ***BEELZEBUB*** HIMSELF! *SEE HERE:*

THE DEVIL AND THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER-WIFE!

WE FIND OUR HERO A LITTLE *WORSE FOR WEAR*, HIS SANITY IN ***TATTERS*** AFTER REPEATED TRIPS INTO THE ***WORLD BEHIND THE CANVAS...***

IT'S *NO USE*, MANNY.

EVEN ***DREAMPAINTING*** WON'T MAKE THE VOICES GO AWAY!

GRANT WOOD, ***AMERICAN GOTHIC.*** DEVIL ON THE FARM. *OKAY...*

THEY'RE GONNA HAVE TO PUT ME IN THE ***LOONY BIN!***

UNFORTUNATELY THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME FOR *SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS OF* **MENTAL HEALTH** IN THIS FAST-PACED ENVIRONMENT OF ***ART GONE ASTRAY!*** THE ***BAI*** IS ON THE LINE WITH ANOTHER CASE!!

RING!

DON'T LET POOR ARTHUR'S UNENTHUSED *STACCATO SUMMATION* FOOL YOU, FAIR READER! THIS IS ***SERIOUS!*** IT WOULD SEEM, AS CAN BE WITNESSED BELOW, THAT NONE OTHER THAN ***SPLIT-TONGUED SATAN*** TOOK A LITTLE TRIP OUT TO ONE OF OUR MOST *BELOVED* FARMS...

WHEN PIGS FLY...

LOW-HANGING FRUIT, MANNY!

ANY IDEA WHERE ***MR. BIG BAD LUCIFER*** MIGHT BE HIDING, PAL?

MY FIRST GUESS WOULD BE THE BARN, SIR!

FANTASTIC GUESS, MR. WOOD!

FRESH NEW HELL

AND SO OUR HEROES ENTER THIS PASTORAL *PROTO-PANDEMONIUM*, READY TO LOCK HORNS (AS IT WERE...) WITH THAT NOTORIOUSLY NAUGHTY *ANGEL* WHO WAS CAST FROM CLOUDY HEAVEN...

DEVIL! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO THIS *AMERICANA GEM* DEPICTING AN INNOCENT AND *PROVINCIAL* MIDWESTERN FAMILY?

OH, *PLEASE*, ARTHUR. HAVE YOU EVER *LOOKED CLOSELY* AT THIS ONE?

I MEAN, *REALLY* LOOKED AT IT?

THAT PERVASIVE AIR OF *MOURNING*...

THE SIMMERING **RESENTMENT** IN THE FARMER'S COLD, *PATRONIZING* GAZE.

THE ENNUI OF HIS DAUGHTER... OR WIFE... OR IS IT *BOTH?*

THE OL' PRINCE OF DARKNESS HAS A POINT, DOESN'T HE? BUT STILL--*ART IS SACRED!* A CHANGE IN JUST **ONE** PAINTING CAN PROVE *CATASTROPHIC* FOR OUR FRAGILE WORLD-OUTSIDE-THE-CANVAS!

SORRY, 'BUB.

YOU STILL CAN'T STAY HERE.

GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!

AND SO OUR HERO USES A PRECISE SET OF ***SPIRITUAL BRUSH STROKES*** TO ***EXORCIZE*** THE KING OF HELL FROM THE GAUNT, *HAPLESS* FARMER!

DAMN YOU, ART BRUT!

BACK TO ***FUSELI'S NIGHTMARE*** WITH YOU!

THAT'S ***THIS***, BY THE WAY. **18TH CENTURY** SWISS OIL PAINTING. AIN'T IT **CREEPY**?

THE RURAL HOMESTEAD SAFE AND SOUND!
BUT AT WHAT COST????!!!!!!!!!!!!

MY BRAIN IS *SCRAMBLED EGGS!*

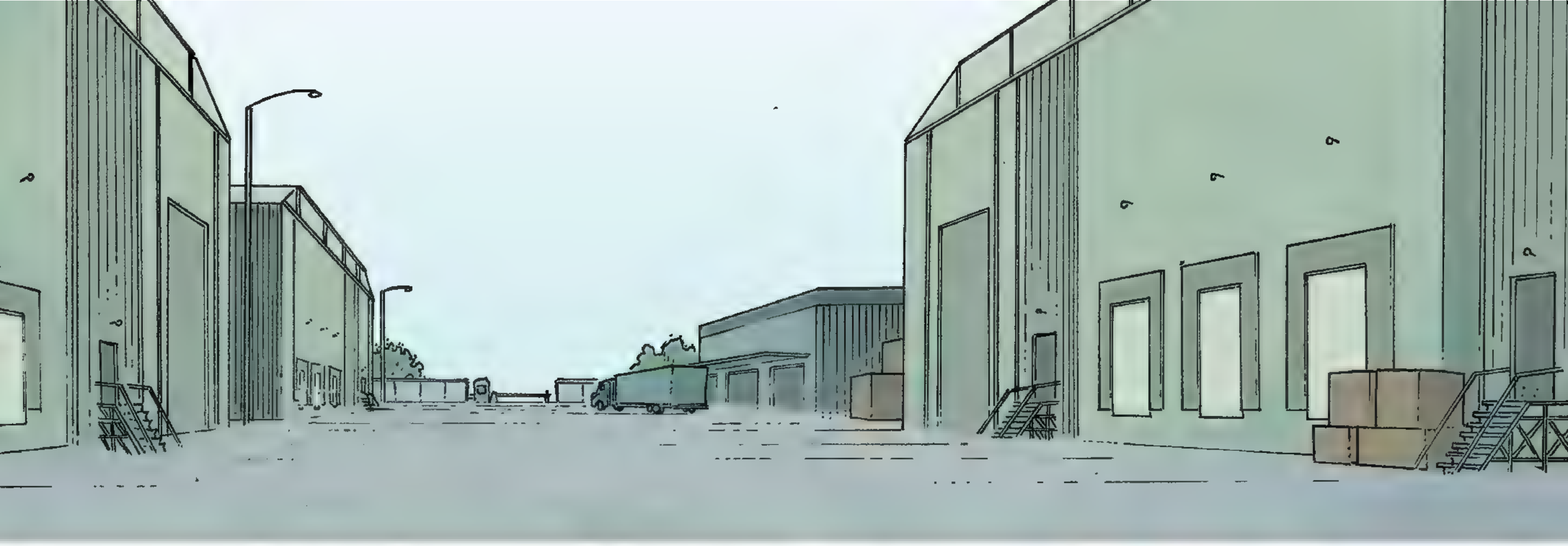
GAHHHH!

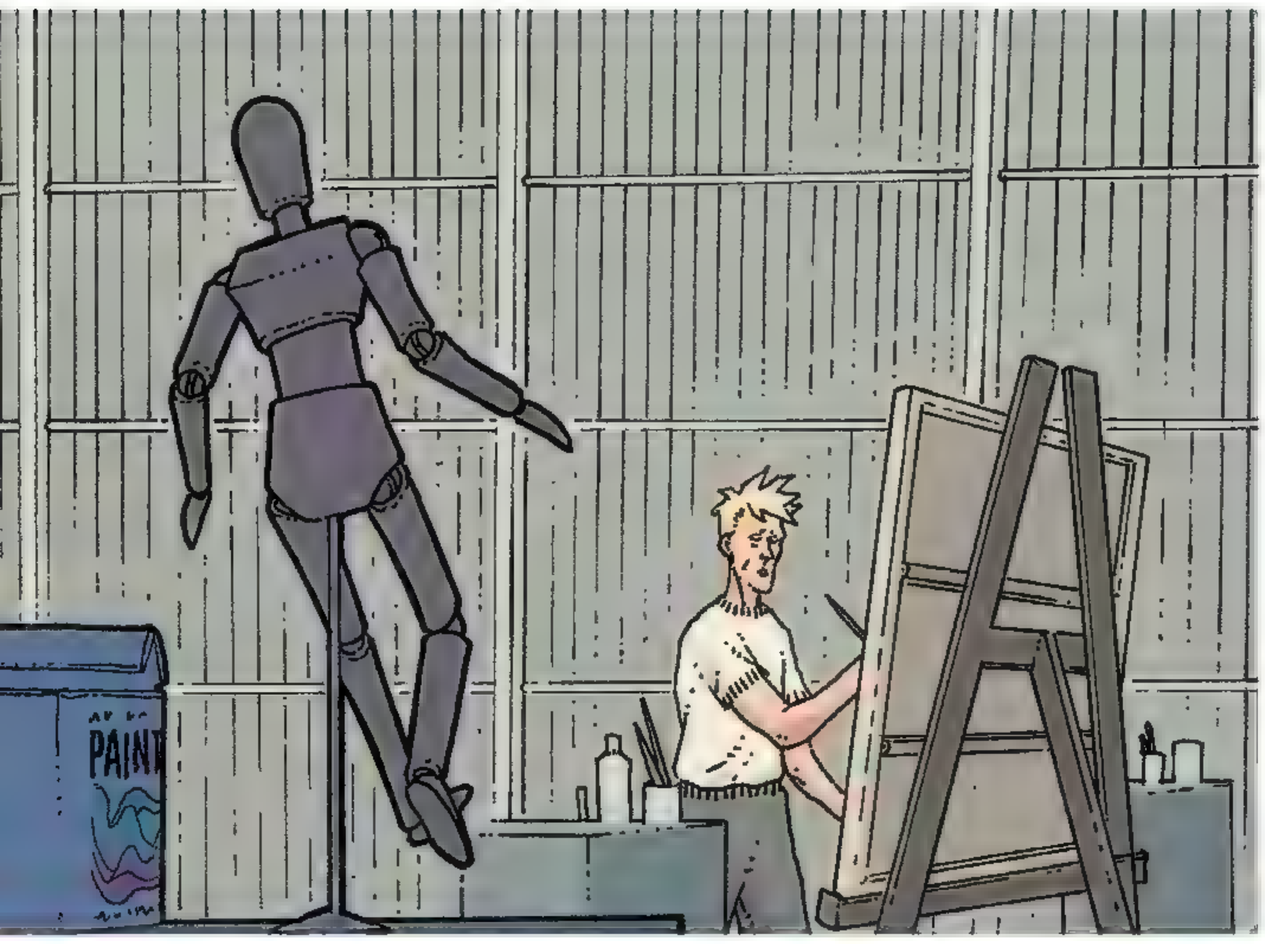
A *STEEP* ONE, IT WOULD SEEM...

...ANYHOW, JOIN US NEXT MONTH FOR ONE ***FINAL*** LOOK BACK AT ***THE EARLY ADVENTURES ARTHUR BRUT***...

AND THE CONCLUSION OF OUR REVISIONIST MAINLINE STORY!

AR

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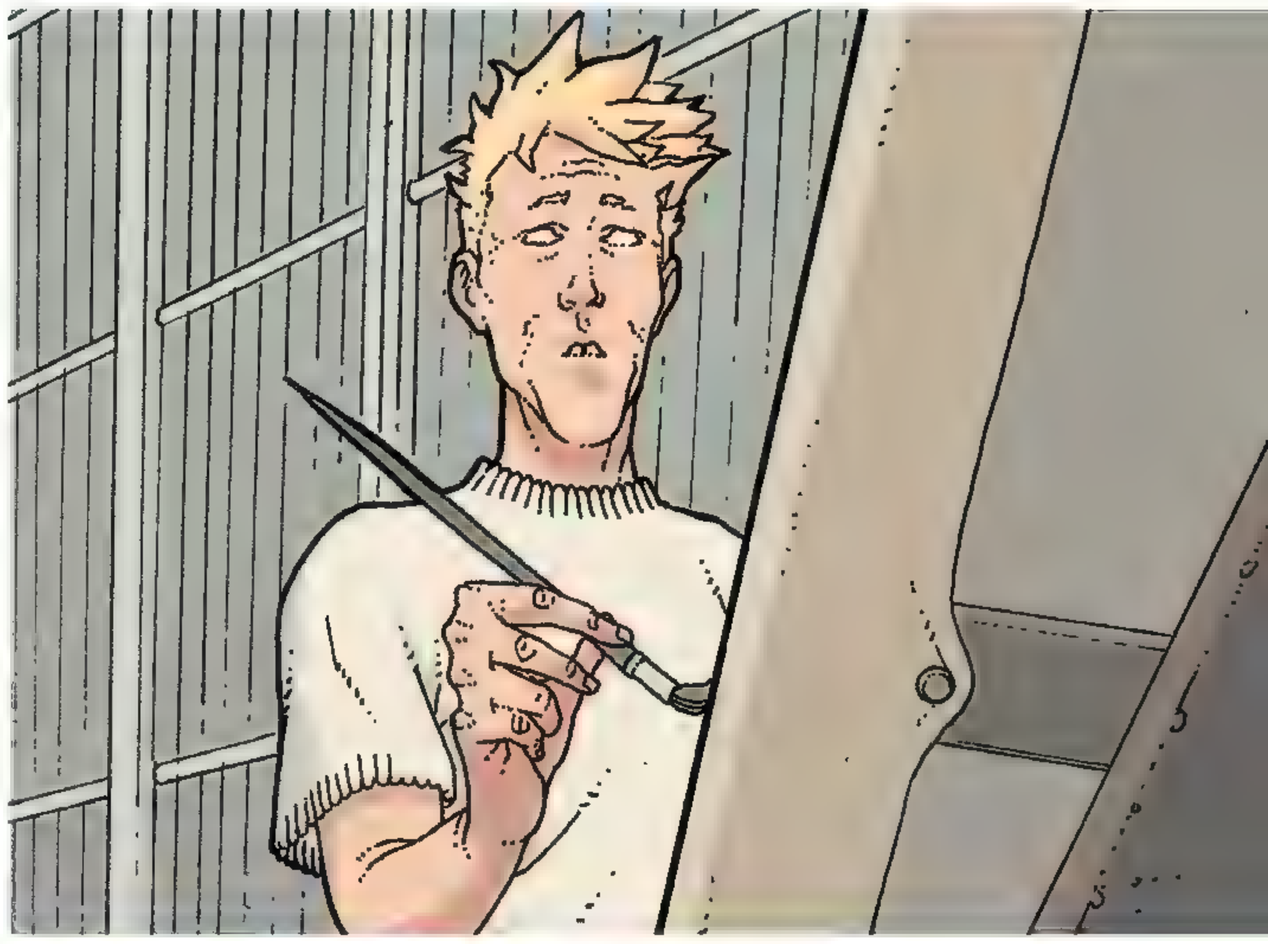

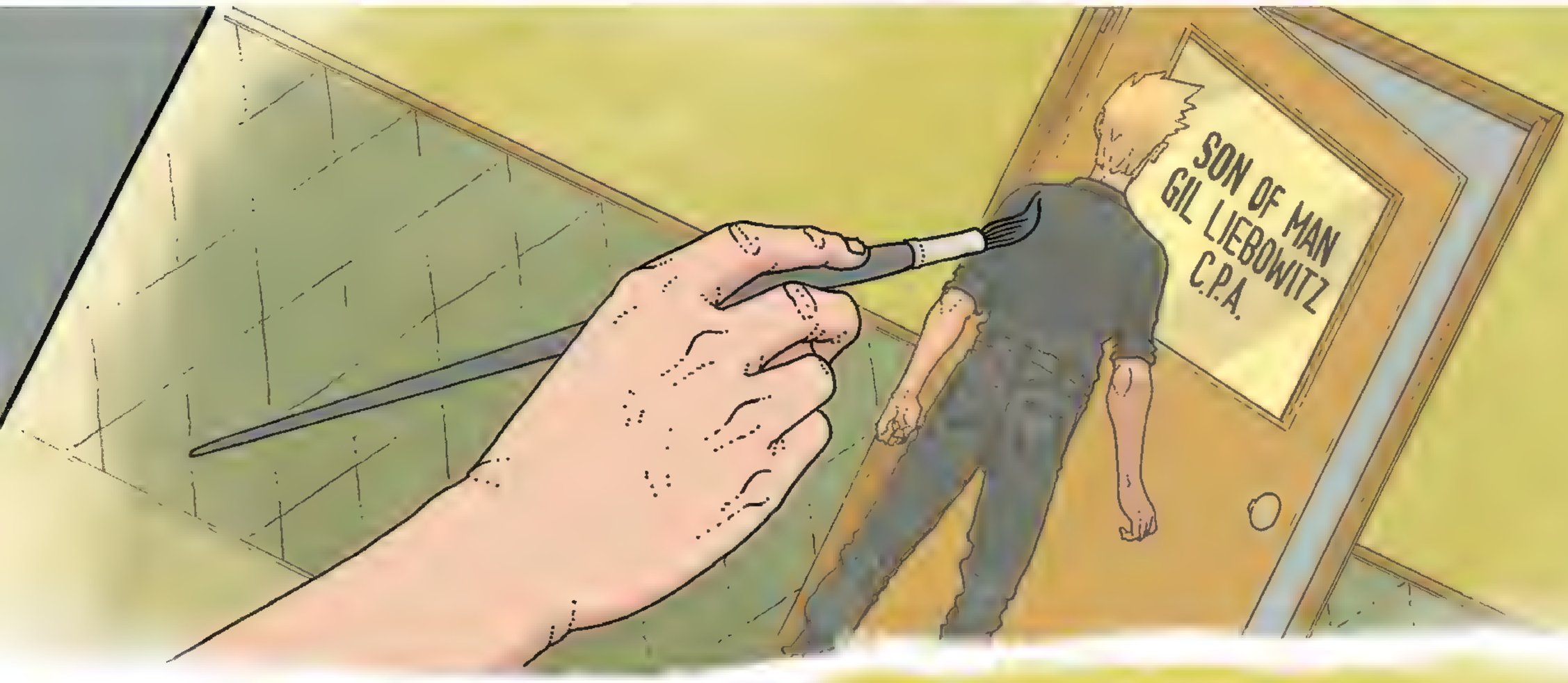
SON OF MAN
GIL LIEBOWITZ
C.P.A.

And I looked him ***straight in the eye*** and I said to him:

"How do ya like *them* apples?"

...I'm gonna have to call you back.

SON OF MAN
GIL LIEBOWITZ C.P.A.

An old client of mine just traipsed in *completely* unannounced.

Well I'll be! ***Artie Brut!***

How ya been, dream-painter?

Oh, *lighten up!* I'm just trying to be *polite*...

...of *course* I ***know*** how you've been!

It's my **job**, after all.

Your job?

My **vocation**: *to know the unknown. To* **see** *the obstructed truth.*

...the **face** behind every apple.

The boy, Gil. I need to find him.

I think he's cutting a **hole** right through *The World Behind the Canvas.*

Tt! You know that place used to have a different *name*, right?

"The Electric Sublime..."

Though I'm not really sure why anyone called it that.

I suppose you'll be wanting a **list.**

Everyone wants *something*, don't they?

There. The *probable path.*

He'll be bouncing around from painting to painting...

What's this last place?

That?

Oh, just a little *secret* spot. Somewhere ***hidden***, even from **me.**

A Sunday Afternoon
Georges Seurat

Nighthawks
Edward Hopper

Guernica
Pablo Picasso

The Room

But that's the kicker, ain't it? There's always something we ***can't see.***

Peel back a layer, you find another one waiting to be peeled. *On and on and on...*

Good luck, Arthur...

"...I have a feeling you're gonna *need* it!"

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SEVEN STARS

GANGSTERISM

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THE UNKNOWN KNOWNS

CHAPTER IV

...hello?

Director Breslin. Thank you for visiting.

We hope you enjoy your stay in the House of Correction.

...where all the flawed little boys and girls are made right.

SLAM!

Like Jeffrey here.

One eye... one eye...

Stop right there, kid! I don't want to--

Gah!

Jeffrey came to us with a stutter and a nasty *facial tic.*

Now look at him.

A veritable **work of art:** *a blank canvas.*

Tabula fucking rasa!

Come on, kid. You don't want to do this.

Hhm!

Kick!

Jeffrey! Listen to me!

Open. One eye open. One. One...

I can't... I can't *stop*. You have to ***shoot*** me. *Please.*

Tick tock, Director.

Shame. He seemed so... *improved.*

Thank you.

Oh well...

...there's more than one way to paint a *death* scene.

Hm.

There.

Gil's info holds up:

The boy's *poisoning* this **Seurat**.

Those *things* are ruining a lovely Sunday in the park!

Eye on the boy, Manny!

At water's edge, sir! He's found *egress*!

We *know* where he's going.

Out where we came in!

Get to the Hopper!

Dreadful *thing.*

I'll give it to him: the kid's got *good taste.*

This was one of my ***favorites.***

An exquisite piece of American realism, sir.

Hold tight a sec, Manny.

Let me talk to him.

Kid, you need to cut it out. ***NOW.***

You're *killing* all my friends, and causing a *heap* of trouble out in the waking world.

Why don't you come with us? We can figure out what's--

kaboom

No!

KABOOM!

PHILLIES

American No 1 Cigars

Little twerp.

You alive, Manny?

Putting myself back together, sir.

The boy seems terribly intent on not being caught.

He can't run forever.

...we'll get him in *Guernica*.

You don't know who **we** are, Director, but we know *all* about you.

Margot Breslin, daughter to Chester "Brez" Breslin, an accomplished *jazz trumpeter.*

Your mother **Elsie** died when you were seven... *heroin overdose.*

Undergrad at Berkeley; Master's at Rhode Island...

...came out to your father and stepmother in 1998.

Agent of the B.A.I. for two years, then *promoted* to **Director** after Jim O'Connor's retirement.

Your colleagues and subordinates ***resent*** you, you know.

They don't believe you've *earned* what you've been given.

You're out of bullets.

So are you.

AHH!

Well done, Margot.

...just you and me now.

Let's make something ***beautiful*** together.

A world *without* features!

GAH!

Every hidden imperfection *exposed* and ***expunged.***

No...

My little sensitives, *touched* with the gift of creativity.

Aren't they *repulsive?*

Some of them will make it to *The Room*, but others...

I'll ***paint*** with their *insides.* Burgundy... crimson... *auburn.*

I wonder what color ***red*** Inny's blood is...

AH!

FUCK YOU!

*:

You bitch!

You fucking bitch!

It's okay...

"...it's all gonna be okay now."

Inside a Picasso! I almost forgot how ***exhilarating*** it can be.

Speak for yourself. I ***hate*** it here.

...every-thing's so *fragmented.*

Cut into a *multitude* of viewpoints.

HYAH!

Quick, before it *reassembles* itself into something new!

Let's go, Manny!

Coming, Master Brut!

Gotcha.

So I guess this must be *The Room.*

Hey, what happened to Manny?

I d-didn't mean to. He was just... *too weird.*

Can't disagree with you there. Those *beady eyes*, that beret...

...what are you drawing?

It's my ***scribblies***. I'm not good with words...

...so I ***draw*** stuff.

But when I draw, *bad things* happen.

I killed all the *moo-cows.*

...and all of Mommy's pet birdies. *And* Mrs. Clark down the street...

Do you know what you *are*, kid?

The doctor-man said I'm a... *s-sensitive.*

A ***misdiagnosis***, I'm afraid.

Me? I've *never* trusted doctors.

They're always telling me I'm ***crazy***...

No...you're a ***tumor***. A *bad thing* that hurts art...and in turn hurts *people*.

You're an **Art Problem**, kiddo.

And it's my job to ***kill*** you...

But I don't wanna get killed!

Nobody ever does.

Is it... gonna *hurt*?

I'd be *lying* if I said no.

I'm scared.

You don't have to be, kid.

Not anymore.

...just a few more minutes and my *friends* should be here. Don't worry, we'll get you all--

Arthur?!

What... how did you--

My God! I'm so happy to see you!

What a *fucking* day.

That **room**...what's *in* there?

Did you come out of a painting?

I...

I'm *done*, Margot.

No more *Art Detective*, no more dream-painting.

Don't try to find me again.

I don't understand. We just...

Why?

Didn't anyone tell you?

I'm fucking *crazy*.

2 months later

I'm gonna have to call you back, Inny. I'll be home late for dinner.

...I love you, too.

We checked every local gallery, museum, and *psych ward.*

No sign of Brut.

We can widen our net and put out an APB to all--

Do you think they *resent* me?

Ma'am?

The bureau, the agents. Do you think that they ***resent*** me?

That I haven't ***earned*** my *job*?

I... I couldn't say, ma'am.

Right.

That's all for today, thank you.

DIRECTOR MARGOT BRESLIN
OPEN IMMEDIATELY

WE'RE STILL WATCHING

I'm sorry, sir.

I know you said to *never* disturb you while you're working...

...but the institute...it's *gone*. Breslin ***ruined*** everything.

And the **sensitives**...we lost Thompson to Brut in the paint-realm. The rest were *freed*...

The world is still so **ugly** and it's all my fault.

...I'll cut off my ear and feed it to wild hogs...

That won't be *necessary*, Andrew. You did everything you could.

As for Brut and Breslin, we've done what we set out to do:

We've let them know ***The Correction*** is about its work...

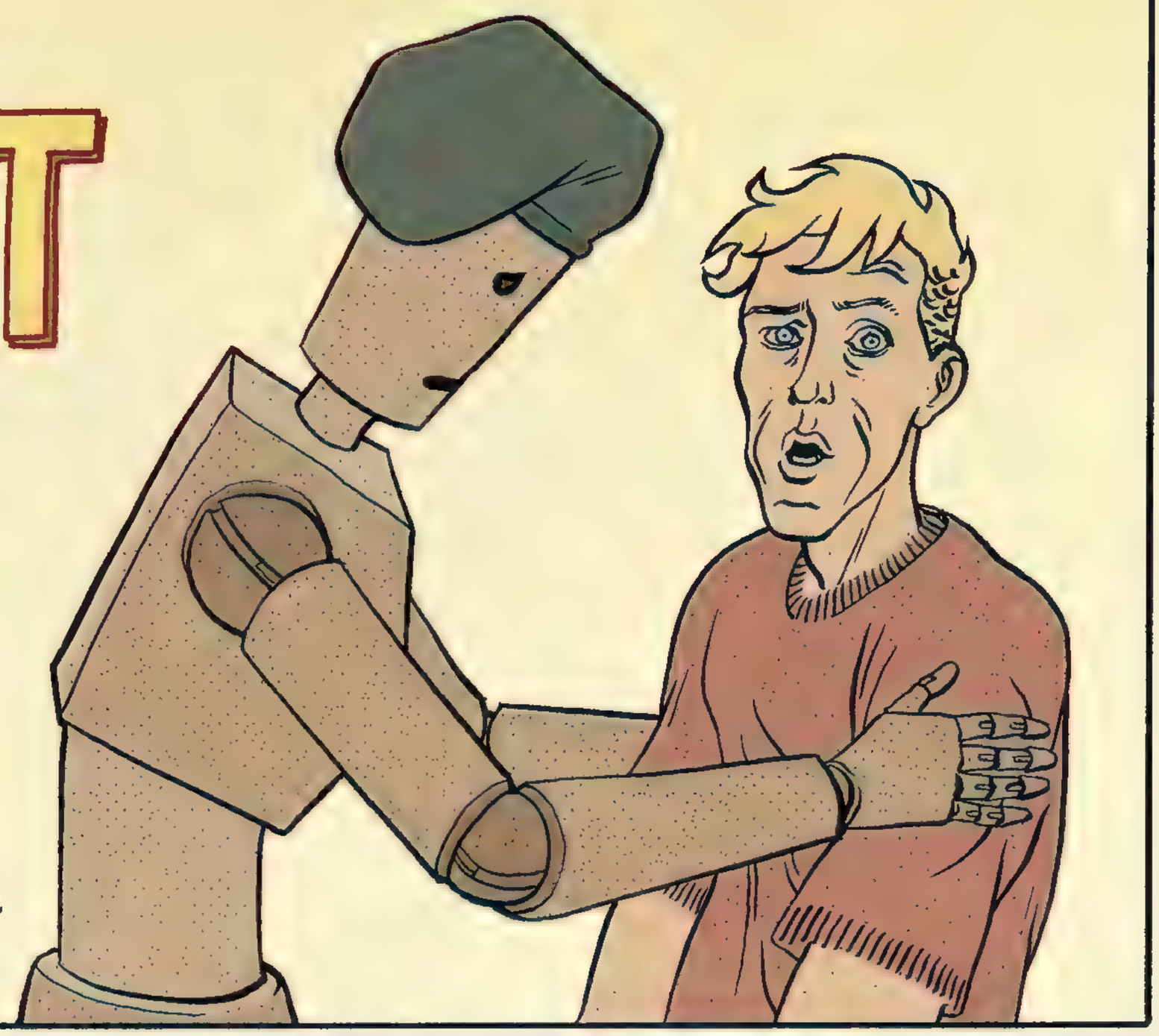
We've left an *impression*.

But wait...

there's just a little more...

THE CONTINUING MENTAL DETERIORATION OF ART BRUT

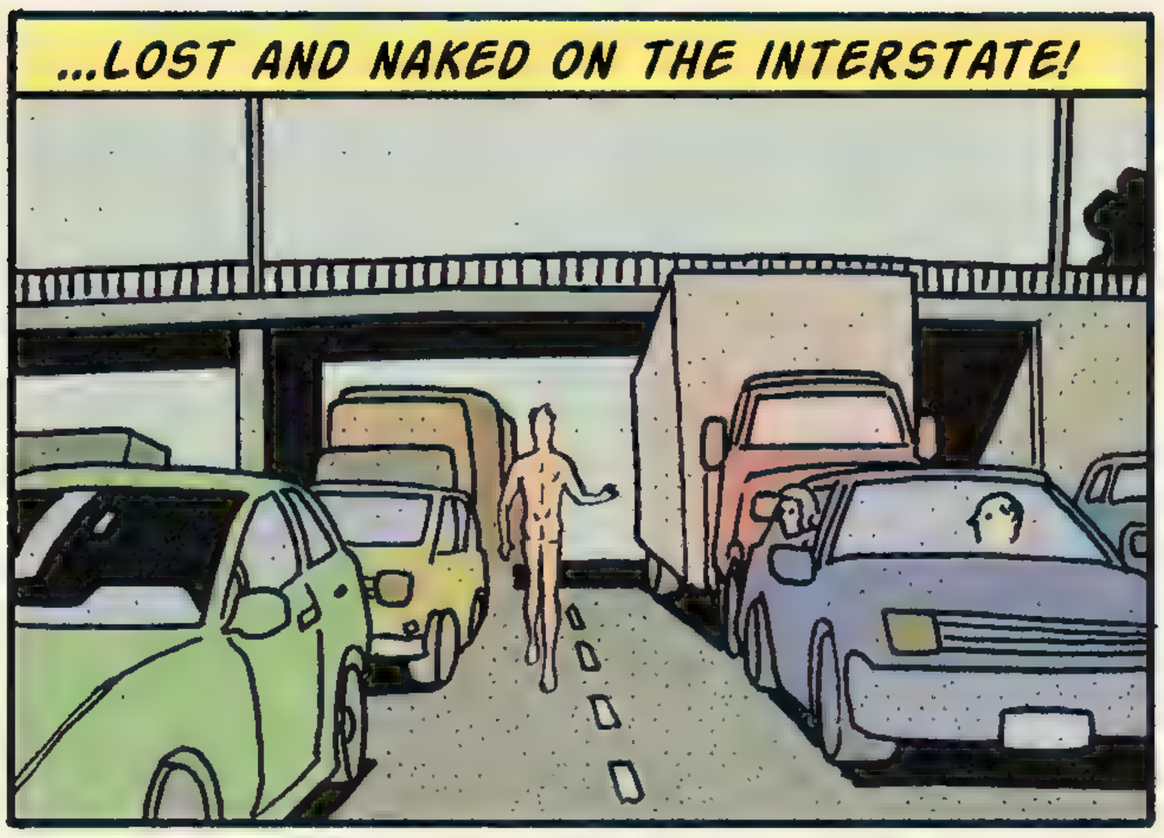
OH, DEAR, DEAR READER. IT WAS OUR *FULL INTENTION* TO RECOUNT ANOTHER DELIGHTFUL ANECDOTE OF ***DERRING DO*** (AND OTHER SUCH DRAMATIC UNDERTAKINGS!) TO YOU THIS DREARY AFTERNOON...BUT IT SEEMS OUR MAIN MAN (***ART BRUT THE MAD DREAMPAINTER!!!!)*** IS PERHAPS A LITTLE **GREEN AROUND THE GILLS?** DISTRACTED, DISTURBED, ***DERANGED***, DEMENTED! **ONE SANDWICH SHORT OF A FULL PICNIC!** HIS RACKET IN DIRE NEED OF BEING *RESTRUNG!* BARMY, UNBALANCED, LOCO DE LA CABEZA! ***NON COMPOS MENTIS...***



...WHICH I SUPPOSE MAKES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ***SENSE***--*EVERY SINGLE MINUTE* SPENT "INSIDE" A CLASSICAL PIECE OF ART/CREATION WARPS POOR ARTHUR'S MIND ***BEYOND REPAIR!***

...AND THUS OUR *HERO OF HUE AND HATCHING* (CROSS- AND OTHERWISE) FINDS HIMSELF IN A SITUATION PRETTY ***UNBEFITTING*** OF SUCH A STORIED INDIVIDUAL...

...LOST AND NAKED ON THE INTERSTATE!



POOR ARTHUR!

...AND POOR *US*, TOO!

...FOR WHAT KINDS OF DREADFUL, DRAB, *DRAWN-OUT* DANGERS WILL COMPROMISE OUR BELOVED "**REALITY**" WITHOUT AN ART CHAMPION READY AND ABLE TO INTERCEDE?!

THANK THE GESSO GODS THAT THE ***BAI*** SHOWED UP BEFORE ARTHUR WAS ABLE TO *CROSS STATE LINES!*

I'M SORRY TO SAY IT, **AGENT BRESLIN**...

IT'S OFF TO THE ***BOOBY HATCH*** FOR ARTHUR BRUT!

...AND TIME FOR ME TO *RETIRE*...

DO YOU THINK THEY'LL HAVE ***PAINT*** WHERE WE'RE GOING, MANNY?

...AND SO OUR ***HERO***, AS SEEN IN THE *OPENING PAGES* OF **CHAPTER ONE** OF THIS **REMASTERED RE-RELEASE** (THE LETTERING SURE HAS GOTTEN BETTER, HASN'T IT?), IS ***LOCKED UP*** IN A PADDED CELL, *RELEGATED TO THE SIDELINES* AS THE WAKING WORLD CONTINUES TO ENDURE ALL MANNER OF ***IMPRESSIONISTIC EMERGENCIES*** (...AND AFFLICTIONS AND IMBROGLIOS AND ANTAGONISMS AND *ART-MA-GEDDONS*...)

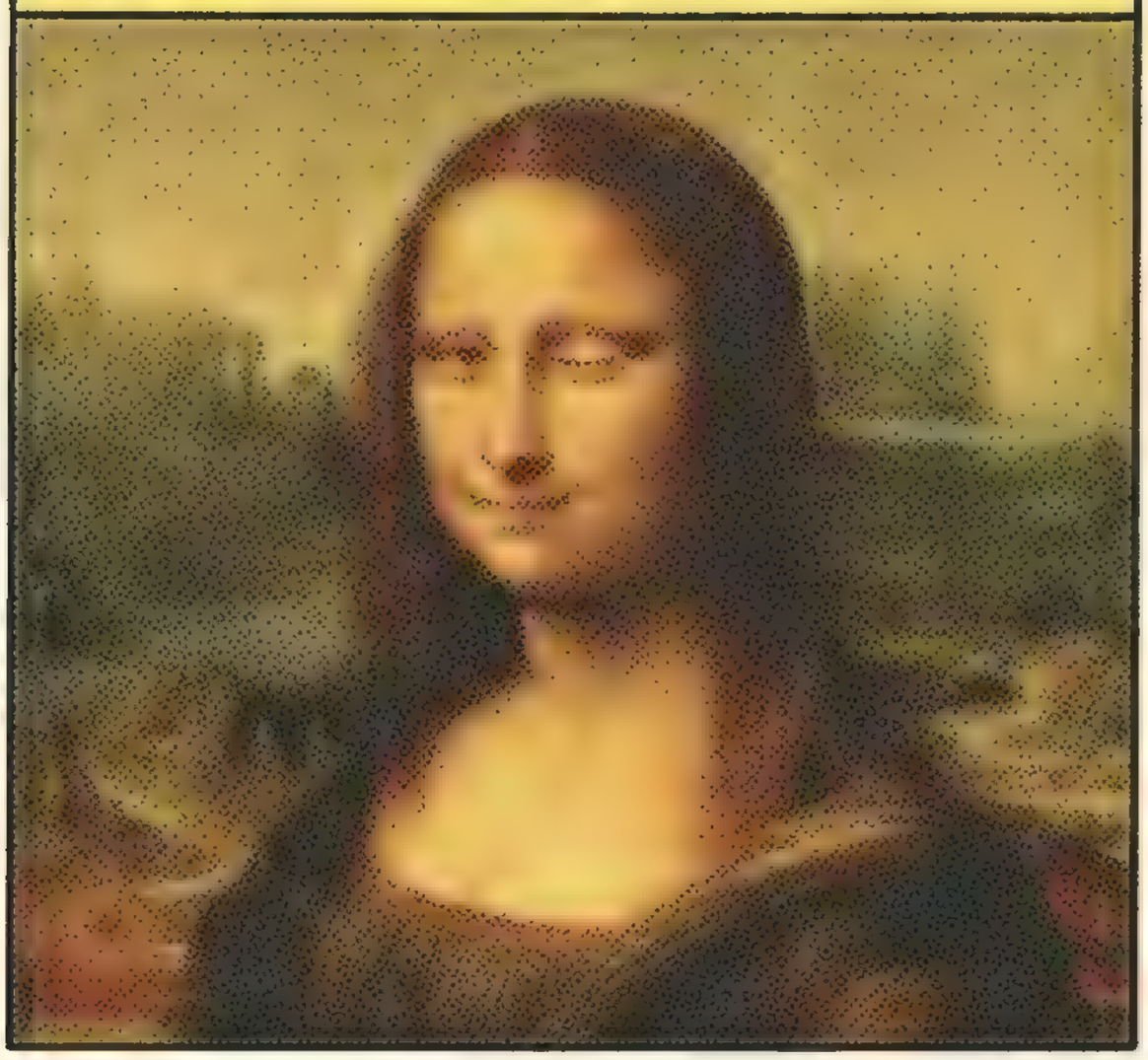
NO! GET ME EGG TEMPERA! GET ME **CANVAS**, GODDAMMIT!

MANNY, *TELL THEM!*

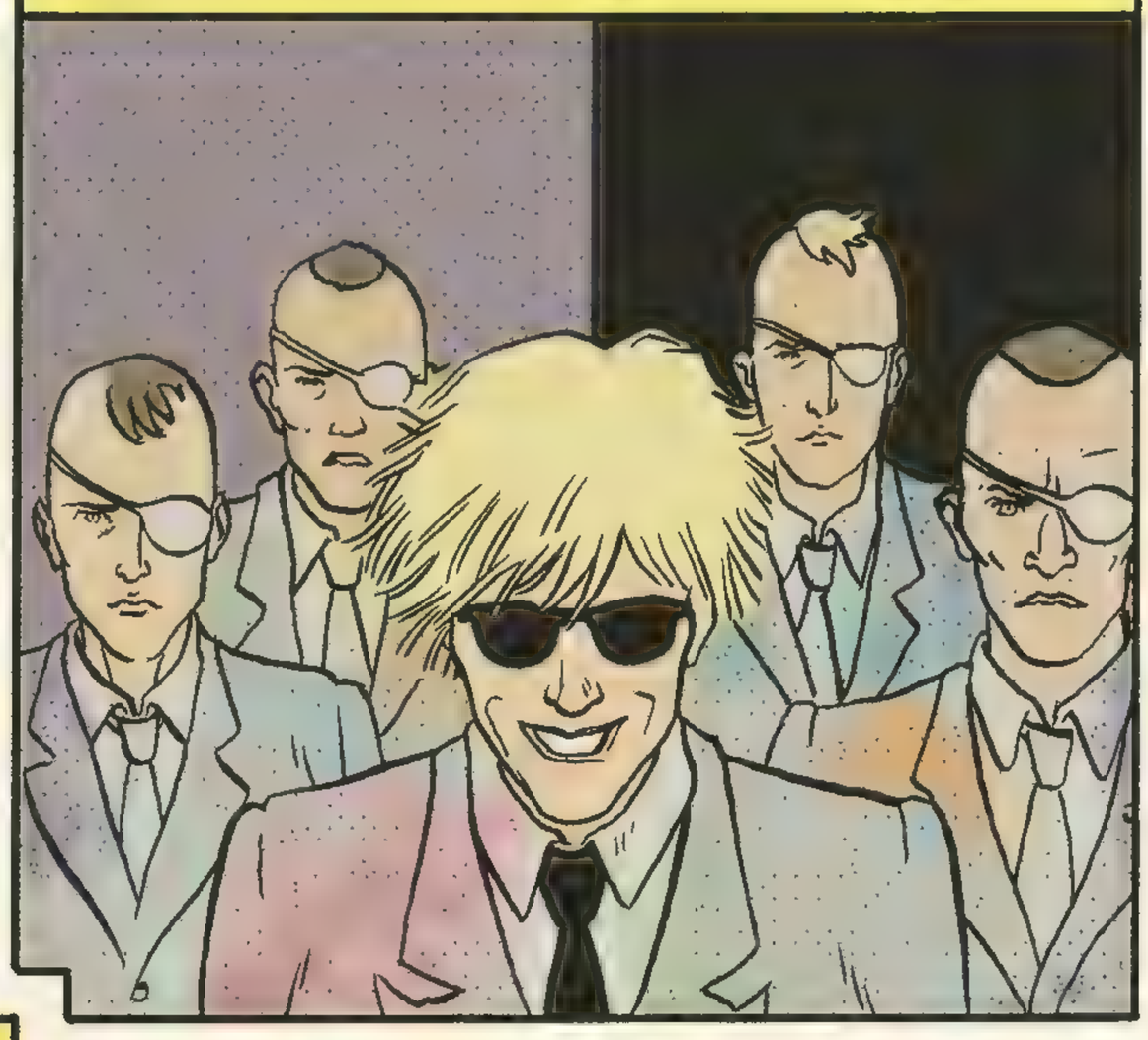
...***BUT*** AS WE ALL KNOW BY NOW, THIS LITTLE PSYCHOLOGICAL PITSTOP WAS ***NOT*** THE END OF ARTHUR BRUT'S STORY. *HIS* ADVENTURES? THEY ***CONTINUED!***

Brut, Arthur

THE ***MONA LISA*** WINKED! (AND *DIED*, R.I.P.).



THE CORRECTION WROUGHT HAVOC IN MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, AND *BEYOND!*



...A LITTLE BOY'S PAINTINGS TURNED ***ALL TOO REAL!***

PEOPLE ***RIPPED THEIR TONGUES OUT***; WERE CAST IN SCALDING HOT BRONZE; WERE ***TORTURED*** AND ***INTIMIDATED*** AND ***SICKENED*** BY THE CONTINUED CONTAMINATON OF OUR *SACRED COMPOSITION!*

...AND IS ***THIS*** THE MAN RESPONSIBLE?
WHO CAN TRULY SAY?

ALL WE CAN DO **NOW** IS *CALL OUT SOFTLY*, HOPING THAT SOMEWHERE, ***WAY OUT THERE***, OUR **SAVIOR** CAN HEAR THESE WHISPERED ENTREATIES...

ARTHUR?

ARTHUR...

ART BRUT!

COVER GALLERY

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE COVERS BY MARTÍN MORAZZO, WITH COLORS BY MAT LOPES

PRO

WHO'S YOUR DADA

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COLLAGE GALLERY

AND NOW: COLLAGES
(SOME PUBLISHED AND SOME NOT)
BY THE INCOMPARABLE
ALEX ECKMAN-LAWN

"WE'RE GOING TO NEED THE DREAMPAINTER!"

PRESENTING HERE THE FIRST MAJOR WORK FROM THE CREATIVE MINDS BEHIND ICE CREAM MAN (W.MAXWELL PRINCE & MARTÍN MORAZZO)...A COLORFUL, **GONZO** ROMP THROUGH ART AND ART HISTORY; THE WORLD OF **FINE ART** IS FALLING APART, AND ONLY **ART BRUT** KNOWS HOW TO FIX IT...

ALONGSIDE THE **BUREAU OF ARTISTIC INTEGRITY**, **ARTHUR BRUT THE MAD DREAMPAINTER** (AND HIS TRUSTY SIDEKICK, **MANNY THE MANNEQUIN**) MUST DIVE BACK INTO THE VERY PAINTINGS THAT MADE HIM INSANE...OR REALITY ITSELF MIGHT JUST CRUMBLE TO PIECES!

EQUAL PARTS POLICE PROCEDURAL, HYPER-FANTASY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER, **ART BRUT** IS A VERITABLE **POLLOCK-SPLATTER** OF COMICS GENRES TOSSED ONTO ONE GIANT PULPY CANVAS!

PLUS: EACH CHAPTER FEATURES WHIMSICAL, **SILVER AGE-STYLE** BACK-UP STORIES REVEALING THE PAINTERLY PAST ADVENTURES OF OUR **ADDLED ART HERO!**

"...A HILARIOUS & HIGH-ART SUPERHERO TALE."
—SCREEN RANT

"A FANTASTICALLY IMAGINATIVE TAKE ON '60S ADVENTURE COMICS, BUT WITH THEIR OWN SPECIAL TWIST SET IN THE WEIRD WORLD OF ART GALLERIES."
—MONKEYS FIGHTING ROBOTS

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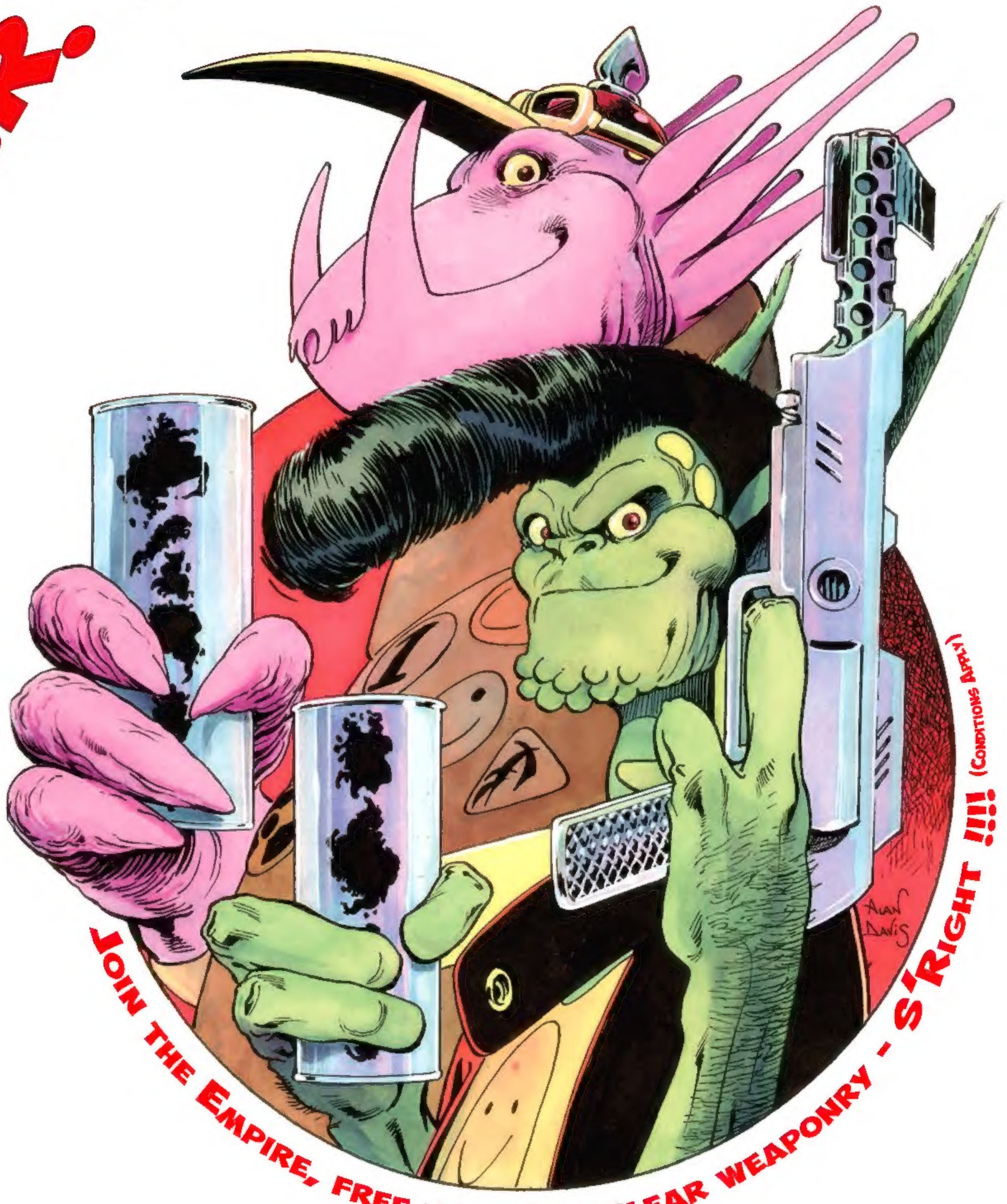

JOIN THE EMPIRE, FREE THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONRY - S'RIGHT !!!! (CONDITIONS APPLY)

K6 NW